RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 P.M.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18TH, 2026

City Council Chambers

675 Wildwood Avenue, Rio Dell

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at approximately 6:00 PM by Mayor Garnes.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

- Mayor Garnes
- Mayor Pro Tem Carter
- Council Member Wilson
- Council Member Woodall

Absent:

- Council Member Orr (Excused)

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Council.

D. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

No ceremonial matters were presented.

Addition of Urgency Item to the Agenda

Prior to Public Presentations, Mayor Garnes advised that a matter had arisen after the agenda was posted requiring action prior to the next regular meeting, and requested Council consensus, pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act, to add the item to the agenda upon a finding of urgency. By consensus, the Council found the item met the urgency criteria and added it to the agenda as Item I.3, “Emergency Consideration of Resolution No. 1661-2026 Designating the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem as the Authorized Signer for CDBG Grant Agreements.”

E. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Tawny Albers (sp. ?), a resident of Riverside Avenue, addressed the Council regarding ongoing concerns with semi-truck parking and activity near her home, a matter she had previously raised with the Council. She reported that truck arrival and departure times had been inconsistent and disruptive to her sleep, though she noted conditions had improved over the preceding several weeks. She stated that on one occasion the driver appeared to depart within a nine-hour period, which she believed violated the federal ten-hour rest requirement for commercial drivers, and described a separate incident in which the truck backed up a considerable distance and struck a utility pole. She stated that a parking permit for the vehicle was subsequently issued under the City’s commercial vehicle parking ordinance, and expressed concern that the incident had been “noted” by police without further action, that she had not known whom to contact and ultimately called 911 herself, and that neighboring residents were not notified when the permit was issued. She stated she did not feel there was adequate transparency or accountability in the process and indicated she planned to raise related concerns regarding electric bikes at a future meeting, as she was unable to do so within her allotted time.

No further members of the public wished to address the Council. Mayor Garnes closed public presentations.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

- 2026/0818.01 – Approve Minutes of the August 4th, 2026, Regular Meeting
- 2026/0818.02 – Receive and File Check Register for July 2026

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

ACTION: Motion made by Carter and seconded by Woodall to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried 4–0 (Council Member Orr absent).

G. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

H. REPORTS / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

1. 2026/0818.03 – City Manager/Staff Update (RECEIVE & FILE)

City Manager Knopp reported that the City is undergoing a Housing Element update and will hold a public workshop on Tuesday, August 25th at 6:00 PM at City Hall, at which the public may receive information and provide feedback on the required Housing Element update.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter had no questions and noted the City had an excellent week for animal control. Council Member Carter reported on the Spay/Neuter Voucher Program, noting that six vouchers were issued in July and that thirteen vouchers were currently outstanding/circulating. She noted the program is self-sustaining, funded through dog license sales revenue rather than the General Fund, and thanked the Council and staff for their support in establishing the program. Mayor Garnes thanked Public Works staff for recently installed improvements at the dog park, noting it was well received by the community.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS / STUDY SESSIONS

1. 2026/0818.04 – Joint Letter of Support for Opportunity Zone 2.0 Designation of Census Tracts in Arcata, Fortuna, and Rio Dell (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

City Manager Knopp reported that the federal Opportunity Zones 2.0 program allows each state to nominate qualifying low-income census tracts for designation, making them eligible for preferential federal tax treatment on long-term private investment. He reported that the California Department of Finance issued a draft recommendation for the state's OZ 2.0 nominations, recommending Rio Dell's census tract (which spans from the Van Duzen River to the Redway/Redcrest area and includes Scotia and Rio Dell), along with one census tract each in Fortuna and Arcata. He noted that these were the only three Humboldt County cities to receive a recommendation, out of an anticipated five county designations, with the remaining two in the Garberville and Hoopa areas. He reported that City staff worked with counterparts in Arcata and Fortuna to prepare a joint mayoral letter formally concurring with the Department of Finance's draft recommendation and requesting that all three tracts be carried forward into the state's final nomination to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, to strengthen the region's case during the public comment period, which closes August 28th.

In response to Council Member Wilson's question regarding how census tracts are determined, City Manager Knopp explained that census tracts are geographic units established at the federal level in connection with the decennial census, that their boundaries are not based on natural features and can be considered somewhat arbitrary, and that poverty levels vary widely between tracts. He noted that the City of Rio Dell falls within a single, roughly 20-mile-wide census tract extending from the confluence of the Van Duzen and Eel Rivers to Redway, while Fortuna is divided into three tracts, Arcata into three, and Eureka into four. Mayor Garnes added that OZ 2.0 provides an incentive for investors to reinvest capital gains in designated tracts in exchange for tax benefits.

ACTION: Motion made by Carter and seconded by Woodall to authorize the Mayor to execute the joint letter of support for Opportunity Zone 2.0 designation of census tracts in Arcata, Fortuna, and Rio Dell. Motion carried 4–0.

2. 2026/0818.05 – Approval of Resolution No. 1681-2026 Amending the Wastewater Capital Budget and Approving the Purchase for the Replacement of Biosolid Dryer Rotary Unions (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

Wastewater Superintendent Moore presented the item, reporting that the biosolid dryer has been out of service for four to six weeks, resulting in an overloaded wastewater treatment plant. He explained that the rotary unions convey the thermal (mineral oil) fluid that regulates the dryer's operating temperature, and that when the unions failed, the dryer's temperature reached approximately 752°F before staff shut it down, which posed a safety concern. He referenced a quotation from BCR Environmental included in the packet and requested Council approval to purchase replacement rotary unions.

In response to questions, Superintendent Moore stated the rotary unions were last replaced approximately one and a half to two years ago and that he was uncertain of their intended service life, noting that installation issues dating back to the dryer's original purchase from ThermoFlite — which went out of business and was acquired by BCR Environmental — have contributed to recurring problems. He noted that BCR, reached through an intermediary company, is difficult to work with but is the sole source for the needed parts, similar to a prior sole-source part purchase for the belt press trailer dryer. Council Member Wilson confirmed there was no operational problem with the plant at present; Superintendent Moore confirmed the plant itself is running well.

ACTION: Motion made by Carter and seconded by Woodall to approve Resolution No. 1681-2026, Amending the Wastewater Capital Budget and Approving the Purchase for the Replacement of Biosolid Dryer Rotary Unions. Motion carried 4–0.

3. 2026/0818.06 – Emergency Consideration of Resolution No. 1661-2026 Designating the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem as the Authorized Signer for CDBG Grant Agreements (URGENCY ITEM – DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

City Manager Knopp presented the item, noting it arose after the agenda was posted due to timing constraints associated with a required CDBG contract amendment. He reported that a property on Belleview Avenue received CDBG-funded earthquake repair assistance from the City and County, including perimeter foundation and other repair work that has since been completed; however, the property's insurer is refusing to insure the property absent a roof replacement. He reported that the City is proposing to amend the existing CDBG contract to provide additional funding to re-roof the home so the rehabilitation can be completed and the project closed out. He explained that, per the California Government Code, CDBG agreements of this nature must be signed by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem rather than the City Manager absent a specific ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute such agreements, and that no such ordinance exists; the current authorizing resolution incorrectly designates the City Manager as signer. He noted staff would review other City agreements to correct similar signatory designations.

In response to Council Member Wilson's question, City Manager Knopp clarified that the resolution addresses only the designation of the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem as the authorized signer for CDBG agreements, he noted the City has some owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program income available that could potentially be used to complete the Belleview Avenue project.

ACTION: Motion made by Carter and seconded by Woodall to approve Resolution No. 1661-2026, Designating the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tem as the Authorized Signer for CDBG Grant Agreements. Motion carried 4–0.

J. SPECIAL CALL ITEMS / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

No items were presented.

K. ORDINANCES / SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

No items were presented.

L. COUNCIL REPORTS / COMMUNICATIONS

Council Member Carter:

- Reported a Nuisance Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 19th at 3:00 p.m., and that she would attend the Fire Commissioners meeting the same day at 5:30 p.m.
- Reported Community Resource Center statistics for July, including 334 people served through commodity (food) distribution and 556 children served through the summer meal program; also reported 15 bus passes, 5 instances of utility assistance, and 6 Spay/Neuter Program vouchers issued, with 13 vouchers currently outstanding.
- Reported that the Resource Center participated in the Wildwood Days Friday night kid games with a dime toss and bake-sale table, and announced the 4th Annual Touch-a-Truck event on Saturday, September 12th, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Rio Dell Fire Department, thanking Police Chief Phinney for arranging a police vehicle to be present.
- Noted the Community Garden's kale harvest and encouraged residents to visit.

In response to a question from Mayor Garnes, Carter reported that Wally, a volunteer cook supported by the Chamber of Commerce, continues to host a weekly barbecue fundraiser each Monday at DJ's Burger Bar, shares his phone number for pre-orders, and recently placed in a rib-cooking contest.

Council Member Wilson:

- Reported on the Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA), noting the City is a member agency and that HWMA accepts up to nine tires per day from residents (subject to a handling fee of less than $20 per tire) as well as leftover paint, which is made available at no cost to the public.

M. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn made and seconded. Motion carried 4–0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:34 PM. The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2nd, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

APPROVED:

____

Debra L. Garnes, Mayor

ATTEST:

____

Kyle Knopp, Acting City Clerk